Every day, the people of Malta trust their government with some of their most personal data, including health information, taxation records, and social security claims. Safeguarding that data is a responsibility that the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) takes very seriously. As the central agency responsible for delivering the Maltese Government’s IT services, MITA must provide a resilient network infrastructure and robust data protection. However, securing a network serving more than 600 sites across Malta and Gozo—from ministerial offices to municipal buildings—is a huge task.

National governments and the highly sensitive citizen data they gather are tempting targets for cyberattacks. With the frequency and sophistication of attacks increasing, MITA knew it had to further improve its security posture; it needed to find new ways to protect government data and services.

Navigating a Changing Threat Landscape

While MITA needed to enhance its overall security to protect against advanced cyber threats, it also needed a security solution that would be simple to scale, easy to manage, and make data more accessible to authorized users.

MITA published a tender for a new security solution that could provide users with reliable, secure connectivity to a scalable, resilient WAN from any device to enable mobile working. Critically, the new system would also have to reduce operational effort for MITA’s Network Services team by providing centralized management of firewall devices spread across two data centers and more than 600 other sites.

Several vendors submitted bids, and MITA conducted a very thorough evaluation and selection process, primarily assessing the technical validity of the proposed solutions, but also bearing in mind cost considerations. After lengthy assessment and testing, MITA chose Fortinet to provide the new security solution, based on the functionality of its technology.

Enhancing Protection with Next-generation Firewalls

Working closely with local Fortinet partner ICT Solutions, MITA invested in FortiGate next-generation firewalls, deploying the devices throughout its nationwide network infrastructure. It installed FortiGate 1500D and 1000D firewalls, configured for high availability, in its two data centers to increase performance, capacity, and security for corporate services, internet services, internet browsing, and VPN aggregation. It also
deployed a combination of FortiGate 300D, 90D, 300E, and 60E firewalls at around 600 locations where broadband or fiber-based connectivity is installed.

For MITA, one of the most crucial operational benefits of its Fortinet investment is the ability to centralize and increase visibility and control over the whole network. FortiAnalyzer and FortiManager provide the central management tools to help MITA detect and deal with security incidents faster and more easily. MITA also uses FortiGuard threat intelligence to help its FortiGate appliances protect the network against new attacks—including zero-day threats—that might have defeated its previous firewalls.

**Greater Visibility and Control—Across the Malta Government Network**

FortiGate firewalls provide enhanced protection and visibility as MITA’s attack surface expands due to increased user mobility. Security troubleshooting, for example, is now significantly easier, even for the most junior members of MITA’s Network Services team. The team can also immediately determine the health of any of its hundreds of FortiGate firewalls using the FortiManager central console.

In addition, this newfound visibility has helped MITA with other aspects of network management and planning. Real-time insights into each firewall’s status—including current bandwidth, active sessions, and hit count—have proved invaluable for capacity management decision-making. Furthermore, MITA now has a greater understanding of network needs for each site, helping it structure access more effectively.

The organization is also using Fortinet solutions to help it continuously improve its security posture and enhance its capabilities. MITA can now automatically marshal advanced threat-protection resources to combat threats detected anywhere in the network. It can also easily segment and segregate traffic—such as critical government data and guest internet browsing—from the endpoint to the network core and out to multi-cloud environments. What is more, Fortinet reports and audits help MITA pinpoint any areas for improvement.

**Exploring Additional Functionality**

Having accomplished the goals outlined in its original tender, MITA is now beginning to draw on the full features of Fortinet solutions to maximize the benefit of its investment. For example, the Network Services team is using web-filtering functionality thanks to the FortiAnalyzer to filter all internet browsing traffic originating from all government users on the network, enabling it to block access to potentially unsafe sites.

By taking advantage of advanced functionality such as this, MITA will keep itself at the forefront of security—and keep government services and citizen data safe on behalf of everyone in Malta.

**Business Impact**

- Improved the government’s security posture across its nationwide network
- Enhanced visibility and control with centralized management tools
- Simplified network management and security troubleshooting
- Prepared for the future of cybersecurity with next-generation functionality

**Solutions**

- FortiGate NGFW
- FortiGuard
- FortiManager
- FortiAnalyzer

“To ensure adequate protection, we have to be at the forefront of cybersecurity, and Fortinet’s solutions give us the advanced capabilities we need.”

– Ramon Mangion, Network Services Manager, MITA